

SAINT GEORGE:

The Journal of the Ruskin Society of Birmingham.

(The Society of the Rose.)

Edited by John Howard Whitehouse.

No. 2. Vol. I.

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CONTENTS.

TOLSTOY'S "WHAT IS ART?" by John C. Kenworthy	Page. 67
LECTURES delivered before the Ruskin Society of Birmingham:	
"John Ruskin: Political Economist." By W. H. Silk	72
"The Language of Line." By Walter Crane, A.R.W.S. (Illustrated by the Author)	85

REVIEWS:

The Poems of John Lucas Tupper.—J. F. Millet and Rustic Art.—Allegories.—Renaud of Montauban.—Literary Year Book.—Bell's Cathedral Series. Andersen's Fairy Tales.—Hesperides	103
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NOTES:

Our First Number	110
Recent Articles on Ruskin	110
<i>The Stones of Venice</i>	111
<i>The Times</i> and <i>Lectures on Landscape</i>	111
Midland Institute Ruskin Essay Competition	112
Annual Report of the Ruskin Society of Birmingham	112
St. George's Guild Ruskin Museum	112
Mr. Ruskin and the Birmingham Society	113
Modern Modes of Advertisement	114

The Ruskin Society of Birmingham

(The Society of the Rose).

PRESIDENTS :

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1897-8. The Very Rev. Chas. W. Stubbs, D.D. (Dean of Ely).

OBJECTS :

- 1.—To form a Centre of Union for Students and others interested in Mr. Ruskin's Writings ;
- 2.—To promote the study and circulation of his works by means of Lectures, Discussions, and the issue of such publications as may be deemed advisable ;
- 3.—To influence public opinion, in relation to Arts and Ethics, on lines which he has indicated ; and
- 4.—Generally to encourage such life and learning as may fitly and usefully abide in this country.

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The Annual Meeting will be held at the Mason College, on Wednesday, April 20th, 1898, at 8 o'clock.

SAINT GEORGE.

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TOLSTOY'S "WHAT IS ART?"

FROM what standpoint? Every man has a standpoint from which he must necessarily judge and value the various activities and concerns which employ his life and the lives of others in his society. That standpoint is his conception of life, his belief as to the nature and possibilities of human existence; that belief, upon which, whether it be clear or confused, strong or weak, stable or shifting, a man inevitably and with the faithfulness of matter to gravitation, acts. Jesus has his standpoint, his conception of life; so has the most dissolute wreck who hangs about a London street-corner.

Therefore, all serious discussion of human affairs is necessarily of two kinds, namely: (a) Discussion of Principle, the question being: What is the nature of life? and (b) Discussion of Detail, the question being, What is the nature and worth of this or that particular activity or concern in life? That is to say, we have first to settle our standpoint, then, from our standpoint, to judge and value all things. Obviously, a man's state of mind upon the first question will wholly determine the views he may hold upon any form of the second question. For instance, if I in my heart believe life to consist in reason, truth, kindness, purity, spirituality, I shall answer such questions as, How should Society be organised? or, What is Art? in a certain way. But if I feel life to be without clear reason, something out of which, whether by truth or untruth, kindness or unkindness, I must get what will please my appetites and senses, then I shall answer the questions quite otherwise.

SAINT GEORGE.

This fact, so clearly necessary to be realised in any serious discussion of life and its affairs, is not only dropped out of sight almost universally, but is actually largely denied. It is asserted that a man may have a sound opinion upon Economics, or Politics, or Art, or Industry, whatever his conviction, or want of conviction, as to the nature, duties, and possibilities of life itself. Which is as much as to assert that a man may have a true mastery of any problem in geometry, whatever his idea—any or none—as to the nature of line, point, surface and solid. Out of such a notion, whole schools of writers, painters, and theatre-artists are saying to us, "Our art is non-moral, non-religious; we do not discuss life, we only practise Art."

The most glaring and painful evidence of this state of things is perhaps in that activity which is currently called "criticism," but is precisely nothing of the kind. From first page to last of our journals and magazines, you will hardly find a single piece of "criticism" which so much as considers the standpoint, the conception of life, from which the writer or artist under discussion works. All is resolved into questions of cleverness, interest, beauty, technique, scholarship. While such "critics" are dealing with writers and artists whose own standpoint, conception of life, is confused and weak, yielded up to convention, orthodoxy, sensuousness, so long their incompetence is less noticeable. But when they come to "criticise" a Tolstoy or a Ruskin, their incompetence is marked and measured, their failure absolute.

A Ruskin, a Tolstoy, great seer, great teacher, lives and works by and for his conception of life. It is his beginning and his end. His earliest utterances prophesy the revelation of it; his later, exhibit it, and expand it. By virtue of it he speaks with light, power and beauty, which men must, and do, confess. But the "critics," seeing the flow of the stream of light, power and beauty, repudiate the stream's source in the man's conception of life. They profess to show us the construction, size, appearance and use, of some great building, and yet ignore or deny that a

TOLSTOY'S "WHAT IS ART?"

science of mechanics was employed in its construction. To be rational, that is, to be useful, a serious critic, in antagonistically considering a serious work, must do one or both of two things. Either he must (a) Destroy the author's or artist's standpoint, proving him to be wrong in his conception of life, or (b) Prove that the author or artist, from his standpoint, has observed wrongly, concluded wrongly. I doubt whether a single piece of writing could be found in which the works of, let us again say, Tolstoy or Ruskin, are so dealt with; the reason being that the man who can feel the need of so dealing with them, discovers their truth, and agrees with them.

But there is an affirmative side to criticism. On this side, the business of the critic is to re-inforce the author, if that be possible; to make such suggestion as may kindle the reader's appetite for the work; to call to mind things useful to hold in mind, and emphasise things proper to be emphasised; to remove difficulties, and, it may be, to correct imperfection. Not "to correct imperfection," but to very briefly attempt those other duties, I ask the reader's attention to Tolstoy's latest book, certainly one of his greatest works, "What is Art?" *

The matter of standpoint, conception of life, is vital to the book. All the critics appear to have missed this vital matter, and discussed, as it were, a steam-engine without regard to steam. They have not troubled to raise the questions, "Is Tolstoy's standpoint right?" and, "From his standpoint has he observed and concluded truly?" They have contented themselves with going over the ground that Tolstoy has gone over, taking their own conclusions from their own standpoint; and where these conclusions differ from Tolstoy's, they say, "Tolstoy is wrong here, and there, and there." And this they do even when they praise the book most highly, as they think.

Tolstoy's standpoint, then, is the belief that the source of our

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SAINT GEORGE.

Life is perfect Love and Truth, as Jesus taught. He finds the true life to be that of the Spirit ; a life which is in contradiction to the animal life, the life of the body. The Spiritual life is the life of love and truth, and everything in our present lives must be examined and valued as leading to, or from, the life of love and truth.

What his conception of life means, Tolstoy has shown us in his practice ; as, indeed, every man must, for our true faith is always embodied in our actions. Renouncing rank, property, friends and reputation, he has put himself on a level with "the common people," sharing their simple life and their useful work, asserting thus his understanding of "the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man." From this standpoint he surveys the world as we know it, and gives us his valuation of, amongst other things, Art. The critics seem to think he has renounced Art, proclaiming against it as something which does not enter into that narrow peasant-life which they suppose him to advocate. Nothing could be falser.

Looking round on all the writing, painting, composing, performing, done among us at such vast expense of labour and pain, he seeks for a basic understanding of what Art is. Rejecting as insufficient all the vague "æsthetic" endeavours to define Art as cult of beauty, he perceives in Art the universal, necessary and inevitable effort of men to reproduce and convey to each other feelings which they have experienced ; which expressions, by making men sensible that they share their human feelings in common, draw mankind into sympathetic union, promoting harmony, peace, love. Hence come tale-telling, song, harmony in sound, reproduction of impressions and ideas by pictures. The worth of these, as Art, is to be judged by the kind and quality of the feelings they express, the best Art being necessarily that produced by the best, that is, the most loving and truthful, life of man. By this criterion Tolstoy disposes of almost all that we call Art to-day ; shewing it to be the debased amusement of a small class of so-

TOLSTOY'S "WHAT IS ART?"

called "rich and cultured," who live on the labour of others, and find their pleasure in mere sense-impressions of form, colour, noise, and verbal or physical skill, often used to convey gross sensuality, and always tending that way. By a wide historical survey, he shows the movement of Art to have always been associated, in its upward tendency, with Religion, which is the rational understanding and just practice of life, and in its downward tendency, with social injustice, and the luxury and corruption of the rich which result therefrom.

The book is so written, free from technicalities and obscurities, and treating only of what is within ordinary knowledge, that it may well be described as "popular." Since first reading Ruskin on Art, I have met nothing but this book which I felt carried me further; and I think it just to say of "What is Art?" that it is Ruskin systematised, simplified, clarified and proved "to the hilt." It is our common humanity and plain sense reasserting themselves against the mass of elaborate futility and mammonish corruption which in our day usurp the place of that true Art which should convey from one to another of us the deepest, noblest, tenderest, feelings and perceptions.

John C. Kenworthy.

JOHN RUSKIN: POLITICAL ECONOMIST.*

By W. H. Silk.

THE influence which the life and writings of John Ruskin have had upon modern English society is not to be accounted for by his great ability, his profound knowledge, or the perfect style of his literary work. It is due rather to his character, to a strength of moral purpose and earnestness, which gives to every word and action a force such as can only be found in consistency and truth. Sometimes his teaching has been received with scorn and anger, but never with indifference. His message was two-fold: he claimed to be a teacher of Art and a teacher of Political Economy, but with him they were both united and both sprang from a common source, viz., the deep religious earnestness of the man; his conviction that morality, religion, obedience to God, and a spirit of brotherly love were in all branches of human life and conduct, of paramount importance, and that every aspect of human life must be considered and judged in reference to these things, and not apart from them. Our business to-night is to consider John Ruskin as a Political Economist; to find out if we can what are the essential characteristics of his teaching, and in what important particulars he differs from the Economists of his day, of whom we will take Mr. John Stuart Mill as the leading authority.

Political Economy then is our subject, and we must attempt a definition—one that shall be accepted by Mr. Ruskin and also by those who denounce his teaching as impracticable and unsound.

Suppose we say, that Political Economy is the science which sets forth the laws which govern the production, the distribution, and the consumption of wealth, or rather which sets forth the conditions under which wealth is honestly produced, justly distributed,

* An Address delivered before the Ruskin Society of Birmingham, 1st December, 1897.

JOHN RUSKIN: POLITICAL ECONOMIST.

and wisely consumed. These qualifying words are all important, for without them it would be impossible to bring Mr. Ruskin's teaching on a line with the others, and we may readily find passages in Mr. Mill's writings to show that he acknowledged the necessity of such qualifying considerations, although, as we shall see, the difference between them is mainly due to the more or less importance which is attached to them.

Mr. Ruskin in his *Fors Clavigera* often uses the term Human Economy instead of Political Economy, and this he does because of the important part which is played by human motive in determining the result which shall be secured, or at all events striven for, in the process. True it is that the possible results are limited, first of all by the methods of nature, and secondly by the extent and accuracy of human knowledge of such methods. But within these limits how great is the variety of selection, how diverse the results which may be secured, and how far-reaching the consequences which follow. In the field of Political Economy, man is not merely an observer, a diligent observer, striving to learn accurately all the lessons of nature; still less is he merely a dumb factor, subject to the disposal of forces over which he has no control, like the brute beasts, for whom we may say there is an Economy which determines for them the conditions of life, but he is an active factor in the process, able by his intelligence or his un-wisdom to make or mar the result, to guide the productive process so as to supply his needs, to distribute the wealth produced justly or unjustly, and to consume the same wisely or unwisely. Now all human action is governed by motive, to which considerations that are moral or ethical of necessity belong; we are therefore justified in claiming for Political Economy the definition of a scientific enquiry into the laws which govern production that shall be honest, distribution that shall be just, and consumption that shall be wise. Thus far we think we may claim there is an agreement between the two masters, but we shall soon see where the difference comes in, and that it is due to the different impor-

SAINT GEORGE.

tance attached to these qualifying words. In treating the subject in detail by Mr. Mill they are scarcely in evidence at all; with Mr. Ruskin, Political Economy becomes a religion, human action is always considered as human *conduct*, and the results are judged as they affect the whole life of man, individual or social, and with reference to the high ideal he has of what human life is capable.

Take first the subject of Wealth.

Mill:

"Wealth then may be defined as all useful or agreeable things which possess exchangeable value, or in other words all useful or agreeable things except those which can be obtained in the quantity desired without labour or sacrifice. It is essential to the ideas of wealth to be susceptible of accumulation. The skill, energy and perseverance of the artisans of a country are reckoned part of its wealth no less than their tools and machinery. According to this definition we should regard all labour as productive which is employed in creating permanent utilities, whether embodied in human beings or in any other animate or inanimate object."

Ruskin:

"The wealth of the world consists broadly in its healthy food-giving land, its convenient building land, its useful animals, its useful minerals, its books, its works of art. The first principle of my Political Economy is that the material wealth of any country is the portion of its possessions which feeds and educates good men and women in it, the connected principle of national policy being, that the strength and power of a country depend absolutely upon the quantity of good men and women in the territory of it, and not at all on the extent of the territory, still less on the number of vile or stupid inhabitants. A good crew in a good ship, however small, is a power; but a bad crew in the biggest ship—none. The wealth of a country is *in* its good men and women and in nothing else; the riches of England are good Englishmen, of Scotland good Scotchmen, and of Ireland good Irishmen."

Any number of extracts could be made from the writings of

JOHN RUSKIN: POLITICAL ECONOMIST.

both these distinguished men to further illustrate the different estimate which they give on their definition of Wealth—probably the above will suffice.

The subject for our consideration which arises from the divergence is, how far is a definition of wealth consistent with sound Political Economy which omits all reference to the character and quality of the uses to which it is put.

Wealth, according to Mill, consists of all useful and agreeable things which possess exchangeable value, and the sum of the wealth of a nation is the total of such things which have accumulated.

"Not so," says Ruskin. It is impossible to conclude of any given mass of acquired wealth, merely by the fact of its existence, whether it signifies good or evil to the nation in the midst of which it exists. Its real value depends on the moral sign attached to it, just as surely as a mathematical quantity depends on the algebraical sign attached to it. Any given accumulation of commercial wealth may be an indication of faithful industries, progressive energies and productive ingenuities, or it may be indications of mortal luxury, merciless tyranny, ruinous chicanery.

Here we see plainly contrasted the two views. Wealth, according to one, is a good thing, a desirable thing on its own account—no question arising as to how it is acquired or to what uses it is put. According to the other, it may be an evil instead of a good thing—illth not wealth—and is certainly so if not honestly produced and wisely consumed.

Without a doubt it is the former view which prevails in modern England, and a large portion of Mr. Ruskin's life has been devoted to the purpose of showing that our boasted civilization is spurious, that the price paid for the luxury and extravagance which prevail is too costly, that the motives which actuate our captains of industry and our industrial life generally are unsound, and that a society built on such a system is doomed to catastrophe.

Without a doubt also the present industrial system is the result of the adoption by the nation of the principles of Political Econo-

SAINT GEORGE.

my as advocated by Mr. Mill. The power of capital increases with its accumulation; it grows year by year, and to a large extent it not only determines the direction in which labour shall be applied and the uses to which it shall be put, but it has a dominating influence in the councils of the nation; it directs the foreign and colonial policy of our statesmen, and always with the same object in view. Profit, interest, rent, are what it seeks. Wealth, for its own sake, is its supreme aim.

To further illustrate the contrast between the two masters in their definition of the character of the wealth which it is the object of Political Economy to secure, note the different position occupied by the all-important factor of man in the process. With Mill the wealth which is to be accumulated consists of utilities embodied in material objects, including intelligence, aptitude, experience, skill embodied in men—nothing is said about character and conduct. Our qualifying words—honest, just, and wise—are apparently of no account, but with Mr. Ruskin they are supreme. Human life is the goal in both cases, but the *quality* of the life is considered the important point by Mr. Ruskin, and a development which lowers the standard of human action, which exalts the selfish as against the unselfish motive, which substitutes luxury for contentment, and the accumulation of the material forms of wealth for true refinement is denounced by him as a progress towards death, not life, and as altogether unworthy of man.

It must not be supposed from what has been said that Mr. Ruskin objects to the accumulation of wealth, even when confined to the utilities included in Mr. Mill's definition. Not at all; nor does he care much in whose hands the accumulation is found. He is no democrat, nor is he a socialist as commonly understood, still less an anarchist; he does not object to landlords or, as he calls them, squires, nor to capitalists in their capacity as employers, but what he complains of is that both squires and employers have neglected the *duties* appertaining to their proper position, with results disastrous alike to themselves and to those dependent upon

JOHN RUSKIN: POLITICAL ECONOMIST.

them. So long as squires make it their business to get as large a revenue as possible from the rent of land and expend it apart from the estate which yields the produce in luxury and extravagance in city life elsewhere; so long as employers exploit their workmen and seek only the accumulation of a fortune regardless of the conditions under which the labourers live, so long will it be impossible to secure the results which according to Mr. Ruskin sound Political Economy seeks to secure. Honest production, just distribution, and wise consumption are impossible under such conditions, and surely in this contention he is right. Whatever we may think of the remedies proposed, and however difficult it may be to determine upon a course of action proper for an individual or a community whose conscience has been touched, it is something to have learnt that the present condition of affairs is wrong, radically wrong, and the sooner it is altered the better. What has to be altered is the motive of life, the source and spring of industrial action, and the main purpose of Mr. Ruskin's writings on Political Economy has been to show that other motives are possible; that history affords abundant illustration of lives motivated differently; that all the best work in the times past has been performed by men and women whose motive was the reverse of that of self-seeking; that really good work is impossible when motivated by the principles of a Political Economy which is based upon covetousness and self-seeking; that in this sphere of human activity as in all others the old Bible adage applies: "He that seeketh his own life shall lose it." It is strange, and it is a very delightful characteristic of his *Fors Clavigera* how he draws from the old book to illustrate his points, and this, not that he finds a system of Political Economy in the Bible, but that he treats Political Economy as Human Economy, as a part of human life, as conduct, and he finds in the Bible more light thrown on human conduct than anywhere else. His analysis of the 119th Psalm, and his comparison of God's work in creation as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis with man's

SAINT GEORGE.

work when motivated either by the good or evil principle are as powerful in their argument as they are delightful in their style. Next to the Bible he quotes from Plato, Dante, and Shakespeare, and of modern writers, Carlyle. Who can wonder that our Political Economists consider him mad.

I do not stand here to-night with a brief for Mr. Ruskin, still less as an apologist seeking for an interpretation of his writings which shall secure your approval at the expense of his real meaning, but rather as a humble student, desirous of catching the spirit of the Master and interpreting the details by the main principle of his teaching. He has written some things hard to be received by people whose lives have been formed amid conditions which are denounced by him in unmeasured terms as immoral and unsound. The receipt of interest he describes as usury, and, therefore, unjust and robbery; the establishment of railways as an infernal means of locomotion, and machine production as disastrous to the true life of the nation. In all these particulars he is directly opposed to the teaching of Modern Political Economists of whom I have taken Mr. Mill as the representative, and to the principles of society as practised by modern civilized states. The receipt of interest for investments is the one means by which capital is accumulated and individual fortunes are made; without our railways and telegraphs modern life would be impossible, and without machine industry the ever increasing population of Europe could not be maintained. Surely in themselves these things are not such unmitigated evils as it is commonly supposed Mr. Ruskin considers them to be; but, indeed, in this respect, Mr. Ruskin has suffered in common with many other writers who do not hesitate to give the message they have to declare to the world in terms which are unqualified in their denunciation of evil. The passages in which he denounces these things are separated from their context and are wilfully misunderstood as constituting the whole of his teaching on Political Economy, and as the utterances of a madman. It is said of his

JOHN RUSKIN: POLITICAL ECONOMIST.

teaching that it is impracticable, and if this could be demonstrated it would be a fatal objection, for Political Economy is a practical science and must be judged by its results. In this, Political Economists are agreed, the difference being that while they are, in the main, satisfied with the results, Mr. Ruskin is highly dissatisfied with them, and traces the evils which must be evident to all thoughtful men as fostered, promoted, intensified, and perpetuated by the conditions of life which possess the sanction and approval of a Political Economy which limits its scope to the accumulation of wealth embodied in utilities, and omits from its consideration the quality of the motive from which such accumulations proceed and the uses to which they are put.

Let us take some of these points of detail, one by one, and apply the practical test of their worth or worthlessness.

Interest.

Whatever may be said about the abstract principle of taking interest for loans or investments, it is at present the only method by which individuals can provide for a time when they shall be unable to earn by labour the necessary means of subsistence for themselves and those dependant on them, and from a national point of view it provides the funds required for that increase in the productive forces of the nation which an ever increasing population and higher standard of living make necessary: so far good, but in a society conditioned as ours is, with the free play of competition and the selfish desire for more wealth with all its accompanying advantages of influence and power, it furnishes the means for undue accumulation in the hands of the few, it gives to capital the tremendous power of control which is used in such an unscrupulous manner, it promotes undue speculation, it has created an ever increasing class of persons who constitute the monied interest, stockbrokers, company promoters, and financiers, who contribute nothing whatever to the production of the wealth of the country, it is the direct cause of those fearful crises in the history of our industrial life which are the result of an unwise

SAINT GEORGE.

development of the powers of production without reference to the demands of consumption, as clearly demonstrated by Professor Hobson in his book on the Evolution of Modern Capitalism, and it furnishes a means by which Governments and monopolists perpetuate a tax upon labour for future generations, ages after the original advance shall have been completely destroyed.

Railways.

The great advantages which are secured to us by the inventions of steam power locomotion and electric telegraphy are too evident to need pointing out here, and are too valuable to permit of our contemplating their abolition for a moment, and, indeed, nothing of the kind is advocated by Mr. Ruskin. To understand his severe criticism upon them and the way they have been promoted and extended, we must think of the contrast drawn by the two passages I read from his writings at the commencement of this discussion, and bear in mind, that to his mind, they stand for the modern England which he describes in his *Fors*, and are by the importance which is attached to them, and by the place they occupy in our social life, the greatest obstacle to the realisation of the ideal England he describes in the passage taken from *Unto this Last*. "Every power of his life," says Mr. Ruskin, "is a power for good or a power for evil," and the knowledge of applied science is one of the greatest powers of modern days, and if wisely used is a power for good, but if used recklessly and regardless of all considerations than that of increasing forms of material wealth, and regardless of the conditions of life of an ever increasing population made possible by its means, it is a power for evil.

Machine Industry.

The quality of machine industry which is commended by the Political Economists is to be found in the enormous added value which it gives to human labour, the increased power of production and facility of exchange: certainly without it modern society could not exist, and it is the most important factor in the industrial development which has taken place through the century

JOHN RUSKIN: POLITICAL ECONOMIST.

now drawing to its close. This is the reason why Mr. Ruskin denounces it in such unmeasured terms; and in the hope of mitigating the evil condition of our national life caused by the unchecked use of such means, he has given up a large portion of his property for the purpose of founding a Guild: given it up, I fear, with no appreciable result. No machines, he says, can increase the possibilities of life, but only the possibilities of idleness. This is just what they have done. Life, according to Mr. Ruskin, consists of something more than the accumulation of forms of material wealth, and idleness is anything but a boon to men who can use it only for dissipation. There are three material things not only useful, but essential to life, he says: pure air, water and earth, and three immaterial things—admiration, hope, and love. Admiration: the power of discerning and taking delight in what is beautiful in visible form and lovely in human character, and necessarily striving to produce what is beautiful in form and to become what is lovely in character. Hope: the recognition by true foresight of better things to be reached hereafter, whether by ourselves or others. Love: both of family or neighbour, faithful and satisfied. These things are to be obtained, he says, by a true political economy, and under our present system we have polluted and vitiated the first three, and for the latter have learnt contempt, despair, and hate. Our political economy is based upon what we state to be the constant instinct of man, the desire to defraud his neighbour. Mr. Ruskin does not denounce our present system without good cause, and has no lack of evidence for his condemnation. The race for wealth has been followed in a most unscrupulous fashion; the true conditions of a healthy, wholesome human life with all the possibilities that attach to increased scientific knowledge, and the social responsibility which such power carries with it, have been lost sight of. The anticipations of our political economists have been largely realized, never was England so rich, luxury is not confined to the few, the standard of living has been raised all round, we of the

SAINT GEORGE.

middle and lower classes have at our command opportunities of enjoyment which our fathers never dreamt of. And yet, who among us is not conscious of something lacking, which is far more important than all we possess? Has the human motive which moves the industrial machine been raised or lowered by the developments which have taken place? The relations which exist between master and servant, employer and employed, landlord and tenant, how have they been modified by the introduction of machine industry, and the development of our monetary system? Are our workmen more or less of artists, craftsmen properly so-called, have they more or less interest in their work? With all our knowledge of applied science, can we produce such master-work as our fathers did? Have we even the desire to do so? Would it pay? What of the enormous population which is drawn to our manufacturing and mining centres and our large towns? What sort of lives do the people live, and what happiness do they find in the pursuit of a calling which is in the main monotonous, devoid of interest, without inspiration, and followed simply and solely for the sake of the wages they can earn? The masters, likewise, whose business aim is to make money, are they any better off in this respect? Are not all the energies and powers of their life absorbed in the all-engrossing object of success in competition which grows keener year by year? The uncontrolled development of machine industry which has taken place during the last half-century has been a frightful waste of power, not only in that it has absorbed the greater part of the energies of the nation, but also that it has unfitted men for the pursuit of higher aims. The deceitfulness of riches!—modern England is deceived by the false promises of happiness made to her by the old temptress of mankind. Machinery has a most useful and valuable purpose to serve in our social life; by its means mighty works can be accomplished, and the control of man over the forces of nature largely increased. By its means the necessities for human life can be assured and supplied to every man, and opportunity given for the development

JOHN RUSKIN: POLITICAL ECONOMIST.

of human life on its artistic and its ethical side; but of what avail is it if the aspirations of life are blunted and its standard lowered by the very instrument which should have served for the opportunity of development. Truly, as Mr. Ruskin says: "Wealth becomes illth." These illustrations of Mr. Ruskin's argument must suffice, though we might take others. Rent, wages, capital, or any topic appertaining to the subject, we should find he treats in the same manner. Always and everywhere with him, human action is human conduct, moral considerations are never indifferent, they are always supreme. The old scripture doctrine of stewardship is with him a practical ground for human life—like the old Hebrew Prophets he enforces his teaching as to the true life of individuals and of the nation with warnings as to the consequences which must inevitably follow a departure from the true path, and like the prophet Isaiah his message is one of hope and of encouragement.

It would be a mistake to interpret Mr. Ruskin's teaching on Political Economy as a message of despair. It is certainly one of warning and of strong denunciation, but if I understand it rightly it is also one of hope, and hope which, at times, becomes confidence. He not only condemns human action which is motivated by a partial, an incomplete analysis of the springs of human conduct, but he supplies the missing motive, and by illustrations drawn from past history, and from the teaching of the greatest and best men of all nations, he seeks to elevate the aims of political economy, to enforce the responsibility which, of necessity, is attached to increased knowledge, and to secure a recognition of those moral and ethical principles, in the absence of which prosperity may become a snare and civilization a fraud. In the nature of this argument it has been necessary to contrast the views of the Political Economists of whom Mr. Mill has been taken as a representative with those of Mr. Ruskin, but it is only right to say that the teaching of the present acknowledged masters of this subject, has advanced far beyond the limitations which were laid

SAINT GEORGE.

down by the former, and that the result has been an approach towards the principles advocated by Mr. Ruskin, or at all events a recognition of the inadequacy of the principles accepted as sufficient by the earlier school. The names of Jevons, of Marshall, of Smart, and of Hobson, to which many others might be added, are a justification for this statement.

Perhaps the objection to Mr. Ruskin's teaching, which has most popular favour, is the statement that it is impracticable. Now, what is the real meaning of that charge? Is it not simply that in a society motived as ours is, such a motive is impracticable? Why, of course it is—no one doubts it—certainly not John Ruskin. But his contention is that our motive is wrong, that it should be altered, that it is inconsistent with the principles of Christianity, with the teachings of Christ, whose servants we profess to be. We are striving to serve God and Mammon, hence the impracticability. Over and over again in the history of man's life has the attempt been made, and always with one result. Do you think the result is likely to be different because of the different form which the attempt has taken under the conditions of applied scientific knowledge and machine production which modern society has at its command?

Mr. Ruskin's message to us is that the same result will follow, and in my humble judgment Mr. Ruskin is absolutely right.

THE LANGUAGE OF LINE.*

By Walter Crane, A.R.W.S.



HOSE constantly repeated and even unconscious visual impressions attached to certain variations in the structure and correlation of line, by which we are all influenced, are important to artists, since they affect all design as a means of expression; and as forming the links of the chain of an inseparable association of ideas must necessarily be interesting to all who care to understand the speech of art.

We may, firstly, regard line, indeed, as a *symbolic* language by itself, standing in the place of both speech and writing, as in primitive signs, picture writing, and hieroglyphics, and we might trace its evolution onwards in two main directions, on the one hand formalizing into the arbitrary character of written language, and on the other developing into the wide field of emblematic, poetic, and allegorical art.

We may also regard Line in its strictly *decorative* province as a species of silent music, or rhythmic control, producing harmonies by means of ornamental form and arrangement: in this direction Line being capable of reaching its highest development as regards beauty of structure and expression.

There is yet a third province—that of *graphic* expression, in which Line becomes the means of the delineation of character, of the external facts and aspects of nature, capable of the representation or even imitation of textures and surfaces, and becoming the faithful chronicler of contemporary life, manners, and history; and finally in its higher monumental forms (which may unite the qualities of all these three kinds) we have the most articulate and permanent record of a people's life and aspirations.

We often hear it said by people anxious to disclaim the possession of graphic skill, "I cannot even draw a straight line." Well,

* A Lecture delivered before the Ruskin Society of Birmingham, 9th February, 1898. The numbers given in the text refer to the illustrations.

SAINT GEORGE.

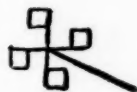
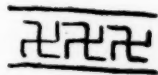
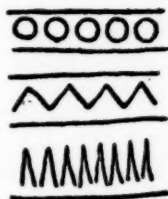
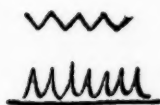
as a matter of fact, it is *very difficult* to draw a perfectly straight line; yet the saying seems to imply a just apprehension of the negative or neutral character of such a line. Yet, joined to the vertical it may be considered as the root or ground from which spring all the expressive variations we know, or as the angle between which we might mark the degrees of those variations, taking as the extremes of thickness or tenuity in art, the thickest lead line of the glazier or the iron bar of the blacksmith on the one hand, and the hair line of the etching needle on the other (1).

In like manner the semi-circle might be considered as the cradle of the family of curved lines radiating or ramifying from it (2).

The straight or level line in nature is one horizon, only perfect on the sea, and we may perceive our semi-circle in the sun rising above it. To emphasise the idea that it is the sun—to make it more expressive, that is—we should want to put certain radiating lines around it (3). We then only repeat in principle one of the earliest symbols devised by man, who expressed in this way and other variations, using one complete circle, his impression of the sun. If we add certain wavy or zig-zag lines to the horizon lines we suggest at once the path of light and the waves of the surface (3). This is the same principle of Line as that used by primitive man when he used the meander or zig-zag to represent or to symbolize water.

The same principle of Line, but carried to higher and more acute points, has done duty for the antithesis of water—fire. This suggests that the form of the old type of kingly crown owes its origin to the same idea (4), and the points were probably originally intended to suggest rays of fire or light springing from the head in the same way as the sun's rays are treated, forming a kind of glory or halo to express the idea of celestial power and majesty, an idea carried out more completely in the rayed nimbus or aureole enclosing sacred personages in Christian and Buddhistic art. We thus have simple line words or graphic shorthand for the sun and the sea, for water and for fire.

THE LANGUAGE OF LINE.



SAINT GEORGE.

The wide air seems more difficult to comprehend in so simple a way. The ancient Egyptians made use of expanded wings. Their goddess (Nut) of the heavens, who figures upon the mummy cases, is a slender figure with great spreading wings supporting a globe or disk (the sun) upon her head. Their symbol of a globe with wings, too, seems to suggestively express the idea of the movement of the earth through space, potent with all forms of life (5). Thus we have simple linear symbols for the primal elements—earth, air, fire, and water.

Ideas of the universe and of the rotation of the stars would seem still more difficult to convey in a simple linear abstract form, yet here again our Scandinavian ancestors had an extremely compact symbol by which they suggested to the mind an image or ground plan of the Norse conception of the universe. This consisted of three circles, one within the other, the outer one surrounded by dots (6). The centre one signified *Midgard*, or the earth, the abode of man; the second circle, *Asgard*, or the abode of the gods; and the outer circle, *Uigard*, or the world of evil spirits, while the dots indicated the unknown starry realms.

There is a striking similarity in general plan between the design of this Scandinavian emblem (often repeated as a decorative pattern on textiles in Anglo-Saxon times) and the diagrams of modern astronomers when they wish to demonstrate the arrangement of the solar system, and the relative position of the sun and the planets in their respective orbits. The axial rotation of the heavens round the pole star is supposed to have been intended by an ancient symbolic sign, known as the Fylfot or Suvastika, which has both a rectangular and curvilinear form (6). There is certainly an irresistible suggestion of rotatory movement in these lines, more emphatic in its later heraldic form, as we find it on an ancient Greek shield, or in the well known bearings of the Isle of Man (6).

All these forms being symbolic at first of the great elemental wonders of nature, or having a divine significance, were supposed to carry a certain benison with them, and were used as marks or

THE LANGUAGE OF LINE.



A



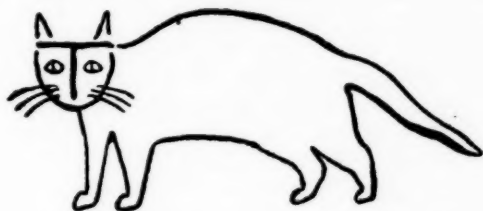
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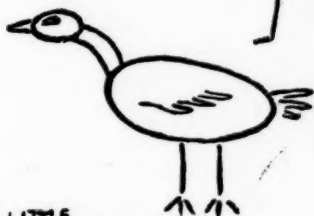
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i



CHARLES & THOMAS



THE LITTLE
MAN & EMU FISH POND

SAINT GEORGE.

signs of good luck. In repetition they had the charm of simple ornament, and in course of time mingling with the other great source of ornamental form—the constructive—became decoration pure and simple.

So we find in the ornament of all early people, the circles, or sun symbols, repeated in rows between horizontal lines, forming borders upon pottery and textiles, or embossed in metal. The zig-zag and meander and the tongues of flame in like manner were reduced to series and system to satisfy the developing æsthetic sense, while the fylfot appears and reappears as an element in border designs on all sorts of objects through ages of variation and in many different countries and periods of art, and to this day may be seen practically illustrated in the form and use of a child's toy (7).

Writing, after all, might be considered as a kind of degraded drawing, the abstract forms of our letters being derived in the course of a long and complex evolution from Egyptian hieroglyphics. It might be said, indeed, of Egyptian art generally, that statements were pictures, and pictures were statements.

Our Roman capital A, for instance, in its ancestral form was supposed to have represented an eagle, of which perhaps we may still discover traces in our type. Our M is traced back to the head of an owl in the Egyptian system. Our i is a relic of the actual eye, reduced to a single ray or eyelash, the pupil left to form the distinctive dot (8). This tendency to dwell upon the salient features in primitive art we may see illustrated in any child's drawing at the present day. How often, for instance, the image of the typical modern citizen decorates our play rooms, walls, and doors in this sort of guise! (9).

There is much to be learned from children's drawings in the frank and symbolic method of statement and the ignoring of inessential details. It is clear that drawing with them is regarded as a language and often as a language *only*. An imaginative child is carrying on a continual drama, and when he is not acting in it

THE LANGUAGE OF LINE.

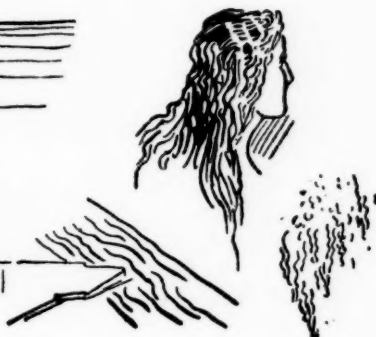
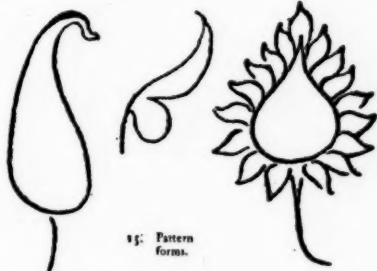
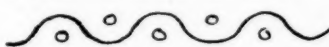
12. Lines of repose.



13. Lines of movement.



14. Suggested constructive origin of linear patterns.



17. Typical linear methods of graphic expression of lines and textures.

SAINT GEORGE.

himself he must at least be his own playwright. As long as the images satisfy his dramatic sense he is content, and it matters not how abstract or rude they may be. Presently his graphic power falls behind his imagination, or, more probably with the acquisition of reading the delights of another language draw him away from that of primitive line; he eats of the tree of knowledge, and perhaps discovers that his first conceptions are bare and bald, and unless the creative impulse is unusually strong, he is discouraged when he faces the grind of school work, which is supposed to increase his graphic powers by methods which often seem dry and remote from any imaginative bearing upon his childish ideals.

How indeliable the linear language is when associated with story or drama, is proved by the clear and ineffaceable impression made upon the mind in childhood by pictures. One never forgets them, though often the text they illustrate. But when the process of drawing, however rude, becomes itself the means of the communication of the story, it is still more impressive.

There is a form of picture-writing which still survives, I believe, in the nursery. There are two simple instances I remember which used to be great favourites: "The Story of Charles and Thomas," and the story of "The Little Man and his Fish-Pond" (10). Further experiments might be made in this direction; perhaps, and on the same principle, by means of rather more complex forms, ideas of a more extensive kind might be suggested—such as this suggestion for a badge for the Ruskin Society of Birmingham—a Rose built up of the five supporters on true hearts, with the emblems of speech, art, defence, literature, labour, united by the dove of amity, with the motto "One for all and all for one" (11).

But let us return to our horizontal line. The idea of *fixity* or *rest* has become inseparably connected with such lines which recall the lines of the level plain, the lines of the lintel in architecture, or the ridge of the roof, or the courses of masonry, or seat or couch: all suggesting fixity of position and repose.

THE LANGUAGE OF LINE.

This expression of repose in graphic art is heightened by undulating lines gradually declining to the horizontal, or leading the eye down to it.

If we put a figure reclining on the couch or the ground the expression of repose would obviously be more complete (12). The same in landscape, where a variety of gently undulating lines leading down to levels or bounded by the sea-line would carry the sense of restfulness more completely than horizontal lines alone could do. Vertical lines in contrast, again, often serve to emphasize the expression of repose, as when we add the stems.

As the vertical lines of columns in a building add to the expression of the horizontal lines of cornice and roof, repose in landscape would also be suggested by the meandering curves of a river or stream always seen when the ground approaches the level. The curve however adds a certain suggestion of *movement*. Directly we vary the horizontal line and make it break or meander into curves, *movement* is expressed, gentle or violent, swift or slow, according to the degree of the angle or curve (13). The short sharp zig-zag suggesting quick energetic movement, the wider and more rounded wave-like curves suggesting gentle flowing motion, until with wider and wider intervals we fall again into the repose of the horizontal.

By means of the meandering line we reach, too, another quality important to expression, especially that of decorative beauty, namely, rhythm. The value of the alternating up-and-down movement expressed by such lines as these was perceived long ago by the earliest potters as agreeably emphasizing the shoulders and lips of their vessels of clay, although they might originally have been derived from primitive construction. The curves of the withy twisting in and out of the stakes of the pre-historic wattled fence, seen in ground plans as a worker stooping over it would see it, might very well have suggested such lines; but however devised, the decorative instinct soon saw their beauty and value in ornamental expression, and they have long ago become part of the

SAINT GEORGE.

stock-in-trade of the designer, and they and their variants may be said to be almost the metre of the decorative artist controlling the masses and movement of design in all kinds (14).

The control of masses in ornamental design is another important part of the expression of Line, for not only by Line is defined our detail, but the *limits of pattern*; that is to say, the often invisible linear plan of lines and curves upon which the pattern is constructed, as well as the invisible curves which regulate the contours of its forms and their relation to each other and the whole (15).

These ground plans of pattern form patterns themselves of a simple sort, and express horizontal or vertical extension or both. Any design built upon such lines may either emphasize the character of its plan or almost entirely conceal it. But a floral form, say in the pattern of a textile, cannot be regarded by the designer as a floral form, pure and simple.

"A primrose by the river's brim
And . . . nothing more."

It must be rhythmically disposed: it must fall into a graceful controlling boundary to enable it to play its part harmoniously in the tune of pattern. The oriental designers thoroughly understood this, and it is this which with the workman-like recognition of the conditions of material and textile graceful fancy which makes their floral designs, whether in carpets, hangings, or embroideries, models of grace and beauty.

Certain forms have taken their place in the grammar of design as indispensable to beautiful ornamental expression. Of such are the Persian and Indian palmette, the Persian pomegranate and rayed flower, and the Arabian and Moorish leaf forms (16). No doubt all of them originally of symbolic meaning of a benedictory kind.

To this day the Chinese are influenced by the significance of a trade mark, and are said to consider both the colour and design of a label before buying. They are evidently people who have not yet lost the use of their eyes. One of our consuls in the East

THE LANGUAGE OF LINE.

has recently said: "Goods intended for the Chinese market should bear a trade mark which expresses a desire for the happiness and prosperity of the consumer or user, and for the increase of his or her descendants. 'Age and happiness,' 'All wishes fulfilled,' 'Best of luck,' 'Blessings and fortune,' 'Fame, beauty, health and power,' 'Dragon's own luck,' 'Oceans of happiness,' or drawings of strange beasts or birds which convey the idea of similar good wishes." It would be too much to say, perhaps, "take care of your trade marks and the goods will take care of themselves," but evidently the Language of Line is of some account even in trade.

But the love of compact and suggestive symbolism, of emblem and figurative expression exists among every people, varying according to the characteristics of the race. Has not each nation its "strange beasts and birds," its national and royal emblems, and in flags highly abstract and conventional arrangements of Line and colour are capable, we know, of evoking the greatest enthusiasm. Apart from the aggressive patriotism which seems so fashionable, they seem to write the word "country" and "home" with all the associations and traditions which gather about them in a shorter way than is possible in any other language. The rose, the shamrock, and the thistle mean as much to the Briton, perhaps, as the palm to the Indian, or the peony to the Chinese, and they are often expressed in a very abstract and heraldic way.

The heralds, too, have invented a method of expressing colours by means of lines of different directions, which must be set down as another faculty of Line.

The graphic draughtsman has his own methods of suggesting colour, mostly by means of contrast and tone; tone and tint being capable of being rendered with the utmost delicacy and truth to natural effect by means of Line, as our finest wood and line-engraving and etching shows. The wood engraver expresses tints of different degrees of density by lines of different degrees of thickness, or by leaving greater or less white spaces between them.

SAINT GEORGE.

And both draughtsmen and engravers use lines of different quality and character to express different textures and surfaces. Rough stone, for instance, or smooth glass, or wood, or hair, or wool (17).

Such lines and systems of line may be taken as the draughtsman's words for these things. The accent, the exact method of pronunciation, as it were, will vary with every individual artist in line, though regarding the whole field of linear expression as practised at different epochs certain family likeness will be observable. The words are universal—it is their use and emphasis which vary, like handwriting which, while acknowledging the same form of letters, differs very widely in style and character with different individuals. At one time, indeed, handwriting was a kind of half-way house to drawing. The old books of the masters of calligraphy are full of decorative flourishes, and methods of producing certain forms, such as swans, fish, serpents, and other fearful wild fowl by means of pure penmanship are given, engraved afterwards upon copper-plate which has since given its name through generations of copy-books to a correct and elegant hand. The flourishes, the beasts and birds have long ago disappeared, like the personification of the winds and the ships from our maps, and with them much romance and suggestion, and also, I venture to think, a considerable degree of that pleasure and interest which stimulates and encourages the beginner and cultivates in imagination a sense of beauty—two most important elements in any scheme or system of education.

A narrow utilitarianism, based upon a system of commercial competition, may shear away all the flora from the hard rocks of bare fact in education, until even its own ends are defeated in so doing, and the mechanical beings it educates no longer answer its demands. We want to restore the relationship between different branches of knowledge, as in design and handicraft. Writing might prove, as I have said, a useful half-way house to drawing, and facility of hand might be cultivated in more varied and interesting ways than in forming the rather stiff, bald, and ugly char-

THE LANGUAGE OF LINE.

acters of the round hand of our copy-books. Certain simple and typical natural forms or units of ornament could certainly be acquired by a child as easily: beginning with circles and the lines derived from them, and gradually proceeding to more complex forms. A certain power of expression by means of Line might be almost imperceptibly acquired, useful and pleasurable to all, and of material help to those whose special talent led them into the domain of design.

With regard to the expression of movement which, as we have seen, even the slightest rhythmic variation of the horizontal line suggests, it is noticeable that when the movement to be expressed becomes action in figures, a series of figures in different stages of that action conveys the idea much more completely and forcibly than an isolated figure in one stage of action would do. In a complete series of actions, such as in bowling at cricket or putting the stone, as represented by instantaneous photography, if we draw an imaginary line touching the highest points of the figure at each stage we get an undulating wave-line rising to its crest and falling again to the horizontal as the stone is cast. So that the wave-line, which is the most simple mode of expressing movement, is actually described when we come to the complex action of the human body in violent exercise.

The completion of the chain of such action as registered by the photograph depends of course upon the completeness of each of the instantaneous links. The expression of action or movement is lost if we take one of the single photographs apart from the rest. It is therefore by no means safe to copy a photographic instantaneous action into a drawing under the delusion that an expression of truthful movement is given. Expression by means of Line as a language presupposes a certain convention, and is bound also to appeal to certain prepossessions of the eye, which is not precisely like a photographic lens. The sweeping wave-like lines and curves of movement are always unmistakable in their expression, and as an instance one may refer to the lines taken by wind-swept

SAINT GEORGE.

trees often seen on our coast, which in course of time grow under those lines, so that though seen in calm summer weather the impression is still that a high wind is blowing.

Besides the expression of movement the waved or serpentine line is associated with ideas of beauty. The undulating subtle outlines of the contours of the human figure which flow one into the other, changing with every movement, afford the finest instances of delicate expressive line, since each line means *life* in its most highly organized shape. The main principles of constructive Line are found there—the fundamental linear systems and forms which control ornament—from the square and circle, which the extremities touch in extension, to the radiating principle in the bones and muscles which perhaps is more expressive than any other of the vital principle itself. We see this in the radiating branching nerve and veins of the living animal organism, from their common centres in head and heart re-echoed in the lines taken by the plants springing from their roots in the ground, and the branches of the trees ramifying from the central stem, or the vein system illustrated in the single leaf. We see it again more emphatically in the spreading of the bird's wing, and the rigid ribs of scallop shell, and throughout constructive art, from the vaulting of Gothic roofs to the delicate ivory ribbed fan in a lady's hand.

Associated with this radiating principle of Line, too, is the idea of aspiration as well as rejoicing expressed in figures holding their arms aloft, as in William Blake's conception in the Book of Job: "When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

The contrary feelings of debasement and despair are expressed by lines and masses bending downwards and overhanging, as of bowed heads and bent figures. The ancient symbol of grief was to put ashes on the head, as much as to say, "I am bowed to the ground." The attitude of grief is expressed in early vase paintings by the hands being placed upon the crown of the head. A submission and subjection was illustrated by the prostrate figure

THE LANGUAGE OF LINE.

with the foot of the conqueror upon the neck. A vertical and a horizontal supplication would be conveyed by a kneeling figure with the hands raised and joined; rejection or repudiation by averted head and extended arm or arms and hands expressing a certain resistance. For exerting actual force in pushing something weighty, the angle is acute and the line of the body approaches the horizontal.

Again, as regards ideas of height or width: If we take two forms—say two pyramids of the same size—and make one with horizontal lines and the other with vertical lines. The one with the vertical lines will appear to be narrower and taller than the horizontally lined one. This is a consideration useful to be remembered by persons of capacious figure, whose apparent width would be increased by the use of decorative horizontal bands, while narrowed by the use of vertical stripes. The same principle applies in the decoration of a room. A low wall cut with patterns running in horizontal lines would look lower and longer, while vertical lines and patterns would increase its apparent height.

All these instances show that there is a considerable range of expression within the reach of Line alone (apart from its purely graphic or pictorial function) that by means of its various modifications various definite ideas are conveyed more directly and more emphatically than by words.

In the graphic and pictorial direction Line language has a considerable field in the modern newspaper and magazine, which have been factors in the evolution of artists in Line. In the first place, controlled by the necessities of wood-engraving and printing with type, which, from the knife-work of the early woodcut to the modern facsimile photographically reproduced and electrotyped process block, gives a certain character to the work of the draughtsman in Line, owing to the very limitations of the methods. Of late, indeed, the facilities of photographic reproduction and the various methods of making plans and blocks from drawings of all kinds have rather superseded line drawing in our periodicals, and

SAINT GEORGE.

the public eye, perhaps, constantly educated by photographs, looks for photographic effects and full tone, and becomes perhaps less appreciative of the more selective knowledge and concentrated skill which an expressive design or graphic drawing in pure Line demands. Artists also, allured by the apparent ease and facility with which tone and wash drawings can be reproduced get to prefer the more facile methods of the brush, and do not care to face the severe study and practice necessary to facile and expressive results in Line.

Yet Line work must remain far more interesting because more directly characteristic of the individual artist and his way of looking at and expressing things and ideas.

What would the art of Albert Dürer be, for instance, without his work in Line in his famous woodcuts and copper-plates? The necessities of the knife and the wood block in the one, and of the needle and the graver and the metal in the other compelled him to concentrate his genius and put the force of his intellect into linear expression all the stronger for its limitations and restrictions. He shows us both power of draughtsmanship, vigorous design, firm and sensitive portraiture and intellectual power, and grotesque as well as poetic and religious feeling. As we look at such works as "The Cannon," "The Flight into Egypt," the heads of Erasmus, of Pirkhimer, of Maximillian, "The Rhinoceros," and the wonderful woodcut series of the *Apocalypse*, we feel that here, at any rate, was a master who regarded Line as a language in every sense of the word.

We have many good and vigorous artists in black and white and designers in Line, and indeed it is in the direction of the popular art of black and white and the Language of Line we must look not only for the most original and characteristic art of our day, but for the real record and mirror of the mind and life of our day. It is the most alive, the most intimate, it is the nearest approach to an art of the people that we possess. It appeals to all sorts and conditions; it goes everywhere; it illustrates every side of life,

THE LANGUAGE OF LINE.

every passing fashion and phase of taste; it serves the offices of both jester and of chronicler—in one column perhaps giving us the handwriting of the barometer (always somewhat crabbed in these latitudes) and on the next page perhaps giving us the lines of that equally variable quantity—ladies' dress! Here, perhaps, it reminds us of our history by the image of some venerable relic of the past in the shape of an ancient building about to retire in favour of the demands of pushing commercialism. There it fosters the mania for expansion, or the restless gold fever by maps and sketches of distant lands.

Considering the extent to which our newspapers now rely upon illustration and graphic demonstration, I have often wondered that none have ventured to dispense with text altogether, and rely wholly on the Language of Line.

By images of a lady in (it must be said) a more or less inadequate costume, one journal daily records or predicts the weather. That is easy. You have only to attach a special artist to the meteorological office. The summary of news might require unusual powers of invention, and perhaps an accepted code of signals. There are many designers already accustomed to deal with the political situation. These illustrations would naturally be *party* coloured. Besides these, for the more scientific observer there might be a political thermometer day by day—the rising or falling bulbs indicated by the heads of representative public men. Agriculture, commerce, shipping would be comparatively easy to deal with suggestively, still more so the relative positions of capital and labour. Stories without words would enliven odd corners, while the interests of sport—apparently the serious section of our newspapers—could easily and effectively be provided for pictorially by experts; while the familiar emblems of “bulls and bears” in varying attitudes might be kept ready to indicate the state of the stock exchange—that pendulum of the world's clock! These are merely suggestions, but if the artists did their work properly an immense amount of time could be saved. One could tell at a glance how


SAINT GEORGE.

matters stood, although it might be necessary to subscribe to more papers to get a complete view of the world.

An Eastern sage said to a British traveller, "Like the majority of your countrymen, you have wandered from place to place till you are happy and content in none." Perhaps we may get tired of wandering some day (even in newspapers) and of filling the world with home-sick Britons, and it may occur to us generally that we have our work cut out for us in setting our house in order at home, and in seeing that every Briton *has* at least a home and a life worth living. Then, perhaps, our demands upon art will be different, we shall not want so many telegraphic despatches to put in the waste paper basket, but seek something more permanent and beautiful to adorn our walls with, where the Language of Line may appeal to us and to our children in new and nobler forms, for the art of a people must always be the expression of its life and ideals.

REVIEWS.

*Poems, by John Lucas Tupper. Edited by W. M. Rossetti.
Longman's, 3s. 6d.*

HE name of J. L. Tupper is not altogether unfamiliar to us. We know him as one of the small band who founded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, also as a contributor to *Mind* and to that treasure of Bibliophiles—*The Germ*. We know him too, under the pseudonym of Outis, as the author of a book called *Hiatus*, on the value and necessity of drawing in modern education, a book which had the honour of being ascribed (not unworthily) to John Ruskin by its first reviewers. The recently published letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti give us further glimpses of this most retiring of "the Brothers," and one passage in those letters gives us a hint that Rossetti thought highly of his friend not only as an artist, but also as a poet of no mean order. "There was a little lyric of Tupper's," he writes, "on the garden of Eden in ruinous decay of which I thought very highly . . . had it been the writing of Edgar Poe it would have enjoyed world-wide celebrity."

That poem is included in the present volume. It deserves the praise that it received, and yet it is not by any means the best poem in the book. If we must make a choice, we would rather have a sonnet "To my friend Holman Hunt," written, as the editor's note informs us, on the fly-leaf of Mr. Hunt's copy of *The Germ*.

"I see so much of sorrow on the earth,
O Hunt, that were it not for natural things,
The careless loitering of lucent springs,
The evening sweetness and the morning mirth
Of songsters, and, far most, amidst this dearth
Of earthly love, thy brave endeavourings
To catch the far harmonious murmurings
That tell how calm a region gave them birth,—
I might be led to doubt, in evil hour,

SAINT GEORGE.

With such a failure as the world doth seem,
Where love and ruth serve churlishness and hate,
I might be won in darkened hour to dream
Of chance misrule, or evil guiding power,—
But for these counsellings to hope and wait."

As J. L. Tupper's anonymous book on drawing was ascribed to John Ruskin, so we should not have blamed the critic who, coming across this poem anonymously, had referred it to the same master. There is the same sympathy with nature and with man, the same firmness of touch and balance of expression, and the same earnest looking forward.

The poems do not readily lend themselves to quotations, for Mr. Tupper is not a poet of phrases; there are no jewels five words long, no purple patches, no languorous assonances or deft feats of verbal counterpoint. But there is the true feeling for nature. "If the heart be right," says Thomas à Kempis, "then will every creature be to thee a mirror of truth and a book of holy doctrine." And of such are these poems. Mr. Tupper is a lover of birds, of gardens, and of rural scenes. But he is *par excellence* the poet of Night in all its moods. He

"Listens what nature doth alone
When men are sleep over-thrown.

He makes us feel the solemnising power of night, its soothing peacefulness, its eeriness; he makes us hear the music of night inaudible by day; he makes us feel its breath "as calm, but scarce as cold as death." He has, too, the rare power of blending science with poetry, and giving poetic expression to modern scientific discovery.

"The ether string
That throbs with colour."

is a most happy rendering in imaginative form of the theory of light vibrations. Other poems are in a lighter vein; one gives a roughly rhymed account of a meeting of the Brotherhood at Mr.

REVIEWS.

Tupper's own house, when D. G. Rossetti read "his latest Muse-born Child," *Sister Helen*, "a rhyme of Hell and Heaven."

In short, Mr. Tupper is no mere writer of verses but a poet in the truer sense. He never published himself. To him poetry, like virtue, was its own reward. And he that receives the poet shall receive the poet's reward.

J. L. Paton.

J. F. Millet and Rustic Art. By Henry Naegely (Henry Gaelyn). London, Elliot Stock, 1898.



R. Gaelyn has one great qualification for his self-imposed tax, viz., a profound reverence not only for Millet the artist but also for Millet the man—a reverence which must impress the most careless of readers. But he has other important qualifications also. His gleanings are the result, he tells us, "of personal recollections; of a long friendship with the great painter's eldest son; of an acquaintance with other members of the family, and with some of his friends and contemporaries; of an intimate knowledge of the land of his birth, of his adopted country, and of that part of Auvergne which furnished him with some of his latest and greatest inspirations; and finally, of a careful study of almost all his works," and in the dedication to the great painter's son, he writes that "if these pages, which I dedicate affectionately to you, reflect somewhat of the sincere emotion that I feel when I think of Millet the man, and Millet the artist; if they serve to correct a few errors that have crept into the works of his biographers; if they throw certain intimate aspects of his great character into stronger relief, and if, finally, they are at times the faithful echo of our talks by the fireside, and in the fields, and in the woods, I

SAINT GEORGE.

shall have attained my end." The latter extract enables us to see very fairly the spirit in which the book is written, and we sincerely congratulate the author upon the result of his labours. He gives us a most vivid picture of a great personality, and tells in a manner which fascinates the reader, the tragic story of his life, with its terrible struggles and disappointments. There is always room for a book of this nature. After reading it we realize more vividly than ever the sublime courage of this marvellous painter, who though "prematurely worn out by ill-health, anxiety, and domestic troubles, nevertheless preserved a most kindly affectionate heart and a noble generous disposition unspoilt to the end."

Allegories by Frederic W. Farrar, Dean of Canterbury. London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1898.

IN this book Dean Farrar has reverted to his earliest ambition in literature, and has given us, in allegorical form, four modern stories. They are, we believe, primarily intended for young people, and the latter will doubtless find them interesting and instructive. We doubt, however, if the form in which these stories are clothed will prove generally popular. Many boys, we fear, will find it too didactic, and would prefer the simple narrative form of *The Three Homes* or *St. Winifred's*. The last allegory in the book, *The Basilisk and the Leopard*, displays that intimate knowledge of school-life which distinguished the author's earlier works. We suppose that most boys know him not as one of the greatest preachers within the English Church, but as the writer of *St. Winifred's* and its companion stories.

REVIEWS.

Renaud of Montauban: First done into English by William Caxton, and now abridged and re-translated by Robert Steele. London: George Allen, 1897.

WE heartily congratulate Mr. Steele upon the result of his labours in connection with this work. His book is at once a pleasure to read and to handle, and ought to have a wide circulation. Mr. Steele's dedicatory letter to Mr. Walter Crane is a very modest and interesting performance, and sets forth, clearly and well, the grounds for re-telling this old French romance :

This long struggle of patience against power, the attitude of Renaud towards his Lord, give us better than any other romance I know, the ideal view of the relations of a knight to his overlord, and this picture itself would, I think, justify me, if justification were needed, for intruding on the public again with tales of old days.

We must not omit a reference to Mr. Fred Mason's illustrations, which are in every way excellent, and give a very special charm to the book.

The Literary Year Book, 1898: edited by Joseph Jacobs. London: George Allen, 1898.

THE second issue of this year-book appears under the new editorship of Mr. Joseph Jacobs. We consider it a great advance upon the first issue, which left considerable room for improvement, and much of the new matter which is included ought to be of great use to literary men. We notice, however, that the Directory of Societies, although better than last year's, is still a long way from being, in any sense, a complete list, and it loses much of its value from the fact that the addresses of the secretaries are not always given.

SAINT GEORGE.

But *The Literary Year-Book* for 1898 should be obtained by all followers of the Master, if only for the exquisite photogravure reproduction of the latest portrait of John Ruskin, taken by Mr. Hollyer, which appears as a frontispiece to the book.

Bell's Cathedral Series. London: George Bell & Sons.

Exeter : By Percy Addleshaw, B.A.

Oxford : By the Rev. Percy Dearmer, M.A.

Rochester : By G. H. Palmer, B.A.

Chester : By Charles Hiatt.

Salisbury :

Canterbury : By Hartley Withers, B.A.



WE feel in going through these Guides that Messrs. Bell merit the sincere gratitude of all lovers of our great English cathedrals. They are model Guides. This, we believe, is the orthodox expression to apply to all Guide-books, but in this instance it is the simple truth. The several writers are each acknowledged authorities upon their respective subjects, and, in dealing with the architecture and associations of the cathedrals, they do not forget the history of the cities themselves. The series is under the general editorship of Gleeson White and E. F. Strange, and the price of each Guide is 1/6.

REVIEWS.

Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales. London: George Allen.

IT would be difficult to prepare a more attractive edition than this of Hans Andersen. The translation is by H. Oskar Sommer, and Arthur J. Gaskin, of the Birmingham School of Art, supplies some hundred illustrations; and more entirely appropriate and charming illustrations no one could wish for. The book, which runs to 826 pages, is excellently printed, both type and paper being first-class. Remembering what Mr. Ruskin has said respecting the value of fairy tales for the young, we very heartily commend this book.

The Hesperides: A Country Garland of Ten Songs from Herrick.
Set to Music by Joseph S. Moorat. London: George Allen.

IN choosing these songs from Herrick to set to music, Mr. Moorat made a happy choice, as the songs selected are most suitable for this purpose. Of the music itself we cannot speak, but the book is got up in a very pretty and delightful form, with 12 full-page designs, cover, end papers, etc., by Mr. Paul Woodroffe.

PAMPHLETS, etc., RECEIVED.

Interest: Some Thoughts on Money-getting, Borrowing, and Lending,
by William Ridley. Liverpool: Ridley & Co., Venice Chambers. 1/-.

The Heart of a Servant, by J. E. A. Brown. London: Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row. 1/-.

The Review of Reviews, for January, February and March.

NOTES.

OUR FIRST NUMBER.

It is with sincere pleasure and gratitude that we record the enthusiastic welcome with which the first number of *Saint George* has been received throughout the country generally. Three editions were called for, and not only did it receive the generous appreciation of the Press, but the Editor has to acknowledge letters of welcome from all parts of the United Kingdom, and which include messages of goodwill and encouragement from many of the most distinguished exponents of Mr. Ruskin's principles. We are deeply sensible of the kindness of our many correspondents, which will be a great help and inspiration to us in our work.

RECENT ARTICLES ON RUSKIN.

Since the publication of our first number, two magazine articles of interest have appeared. The first was in the January number of the *Review of Reviews*, and was written by Mr. Lucking Tavener. It is an interesting and sympathetic character sketch of Mr. Ruskin, and is fully illustrated. The second article was from the pen of Mr. James Manning Bruce, and appeared in the *Century Magazine* for February. Under the title of "Ruskin as an Oxford Lecturer," Mr. Bruce gives some most interesting and delightful reminiscences of Mr. Ruskin as Slade lecturer at Oxford some twenty years ago. The paper is full of exquisite stories, one of which we cannot resist quoting:—"He had been speaking with approval of unsectarian education—'teach no Church catechism; teach only the Mosaic law and the love of God'—and had commended a recent speech in that vein by Professor Max Müller. Then, after a pause, he began very slowly: 'It is a vice of mine, in the fear of not saying strong things strongly enough, to use a violence of language that takes from their strength; but this is my calm and cool conviction. I tell you, without a note of excitement in my

NOTES.

voice or manner, in language of absolute and tamest moderation, as I stand quietly here with my arms hanging at my sides' (letting his arms fall, and holding them stiffly down) 'unless you teach your children to honour their fathers and mothers, and to love God, and to reverence their king, and to treat with tenderness and take care of kindly all inferior creatures, to regard all things duly, even if they have only the semblance of life, and especially such as God has endowed with the power of giving us pleasure—as flowers—unless you teach your children these things' (by this time the pinioned arms, which had been gradually freeing themselves, were revolving in frantic curves, and the carefully modulated voice had risen till it became a hoarse shriek in the climax) 'you will be educating Frankensteins and demons.'"

THE STONES OF VENICE.

Our readers will doubtless have noticed with interest that Mr. George Allen has in preparation a new small complete edition of the *Stones of Venice*. As this work cannot at present be obtained in its complete form for less than £4 4s., we have no doubt that the new edition will be warmly welcomed. Mr. Allen hopes to have the first volume ready in July.

THE TIMES AND LECTURES ON LANDSCAPE.

The *Times*, in reviewing Mr. Ruskin's recently published *Lectures on Landscape*, assumed that Mr. W. G. Collingwood was wrong in saying that the lectures were not as public as the rest of Mr. Ruskin's. Mr. Collingwood is, however, quite correct. These lectures were distinctly addressed to the students of the drawing class then newly founded and largely attended, and Mr. Ruskin prefaced the first lecture by a humorous apology for the exclusion of ladies and the public; his reason being that he could not properly shew

SAINT GEORGE.

his very numerous examples of Turner, etc., to a large audience, and he wanted to discuss the working of his scheme in the drawing school with those who were actually concerned in it.

MIDLAND INSTITUTE RUSKIN ESSAY COMPETITION.

At the commencement of the Session the Ruskin Society of Birmingham offered a prize to the Midland Institute for the best essay upon *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. I. The competition was open to all *bona-fide* students of the Institute, the object being to encourage the study of Ruskin. At the request of the Council of the Institute, the Rev. A. Jamson Smith, M.A., kindly consented to act as examiner, and on his recommendation the prize has been divided between Mr. Brian Hodgson and Mr. Arnold W. Smith. Both the successful competitors are well known Institute students, the latter having matriculated in the first division at the last examination of the University of London.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RUSKIN SOCIETY OF BIRMINGHAM.

The Annual Report of the Ruskin Society of Birmingham, which will be issued in a few days, will record the work of a most successful session. The interest and enthusiasm which marked the foundation of the Society remain unabated, and the sphere of its work and influence has been greatly extended during the session now drawing to a close. Its members have cause for congratulation in the powerful position to which it has attained. The annual report can be obtained free, on application to the honorary secretary.

ST. GEORGE'S GUILD RUSKIN MUSEUM.

We desire to call the attention of our readers to the fact that the Trustees of St. George's Guild are issuing a series of photographs of the examples of Art contained in the Ruskin Museum collection. They com-

NOTES.

prise reproductions of original drawings by Mr. Ruskin himself, and by the artists whom he specially employed for the purpose. The examples will serve either as extra illustrations to *The Principles of Art*, as expounded by Mr. Ruskin, and in which volume they are fully described, or for the purpose of being framed; and they are therefore to be obtained either mounted or unmounted. Mr. Alderman George Baker, J.P., one of the trustees of St. George's Guild, has very generously presented a set of these photographs to the Ruskin Society of Birmingham, and members will have an opportunity of inspecting them at the annual meeting of the Society to be held on the 20th April.

MR. RUSKIN
AND THE
BIRMINGHAM
SOCIETY.

Since the publication of our January number, the following letter has been received from Mrs. Arthur Severn, acknowledging the congratulations of the Birmingham Society, which were forwarded to Mr. Ruskin on the attainment of his 79th birthday in February last:

Brantwood,

Coniston Lake, R.S.O.

8th February, 1898.

Dear Sir,

Mr. Ruskin desires me to thank you very much for your kind letter of congratulation received on his birthday. He feels deeply all you have said, and the expressions of kindness towards himself, and the gratifying manner in which you speak of his work, have made the day very happy for him, and he hopes you will convey to the Council and members of the Ruskin Society of Birmingham what pleasure your letter and their good wishes have given him.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) JOAN RUSKIN SEVERN.

To J. Howard Whitehouse.

SAINT GEORGE.

MODERN MODES OF ADVERTISEMENT. The destruction of natural beauty through an improper and disgraceful mode of advertisement continues unchecked, and would appear to be on the increase. We take the following paragraph from a recent issue of the *Daily Chronicle* :

The huge advertisement boards, elevated on posts, which disfigure the fields and woodlands bordering the railways, are bad enough to the æsthetic sense, but there is a worse terror in store—the advertising windmill, a specimen of which is now being erected in a meadow near a North London junction. The windmill is substantially constructed of wood and iron, and is painfully permanent in appearance. Long arms project at convenient elevations from the centre pole, which is about thirty feet in height, and to these are attached highly-coloured advertisement boards, eight or ten feet square, and slightly curved to catch the wind. With the gentlest breeze the whole edifice will revolve, and proclaim to an astonished world the merits of soaps and pills, of infants' foods and hair restorers.

Not yet do we carry out the Creed of Saint George, which says :
“ I will strive to guard and perfect all natural beauty upon the earth.”